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CLAIM STATUS

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35. (New)

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35. (New)   A method for providing a user with access to selected ones of a plurality of target objects that are accessible via an electronic storage media, where said users are connected via user terminals and bidirectional data communication connections to a target server system which includes said electronic storage media, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   automatically generating target profiles for target objects that are stored in said electronic storage media, each of said target profiles being generated from the contents of an associated one of said target objects and their associated sets of target object characteristics;

(b)   automatically generating at least one user target profile interest summary for a user at a user terminal, each said user target profile interest summary being generated from target profiles associated with ones of said target objects accessed by said user;

(c)   enabling access to said plurality of target objects stored on said electronic storage media by users via said target profiles and said at least one user target profile interest summary;

(d)   correlating said user target profile interest summaries, generated for an identified user, with said generated target profiles to identify ones of said plurality of target objects stored on said electronic storage media that are likely to be of interest to said identified user.

(e)   wherein said step of enabling access further comprises:

(1)   transmitting a list, that identifies at least one of said identified ones of said plurality of target objects, to said identified user; and

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(2) providing access to a selected one of said plurality of target objects stored on said electronic storage media in response to said identified user selecting an item from said list.

(f) wherein said step of providing at least one of the following transmission steps:

(1) transmitting data, in response to said identified user activating a one of said user terminals to identify said selected item on said list, indicative of said identified user's selection of said selected item from said one user terminal to said target server via a one of said bidirectional data communication connections;

(2) transmitting at least one of said identified ones of said plurality of target objects, to said identified user in advance of said user requesting said at least one of said identified ones of said plurality of target objects;

(g) wherein said step of providing access further comprises:

(1) retrieving, in response to receipt of said data from said one user terminal, a target object identified by said selected item from said electronic storage media; and

(2) transmitting, via a one of said bidirectional data communication connections, said retrieved target object to said one user terminal for display thereon to said identified user.

5   36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein said step of enabling access further
comprises:

transmitting a list, that identifies at least one of said identified ones of said plurality
of target objects, to said identified user, and

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transmitting said identified ones of said plurality of target objects stored on said
electronic storage media from said target server system to a designated server
located closer via said bidirectional electronic communications connections to said
user terminal than said target server system.

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37. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein said step of providing access
comprises:

transmitting data, in response to said identified user activating a one of said user
20   terminals to identify said selected item on said list, indicative of said identified
user's selection of said selected item from said one user terminal to said designated
server via a one of said bidirectional data communication connections.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein said step providing access further
25   comprises:

retrieving, in response to receipt of said data from said one user terminal, a target
object identified by said selected item from said designated server; and

30   transmitting, via a one of said bidirectional data communication connections, said
retrieved target object to said one user terminal for display thereon to said
identified user.

39. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein said target object is a document having at least one page, said step of enabling access comprises:

automatically generating a user target profile interest summary for an identified user that is indicative of target objects retrieved by said identified user as well as the number of pages of said retrieved documents accessed by said identified user.

40. (New) The method of claim 39 wherein said automatically generated user target profile interest summaries are also indicative of a length of time said identified user accessed said retrieved target objects.

41. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein said step of automatically generating target profiles comprises:

automatically generating a hierarchical menu that directs said users to at least a subset of said plurality of target objects stored on said electronic media, comprising:

sorting all target objects in said subset into a plurality of clusters of target objects based on an empirical measure of similarity of content of said target objects, and

generating a hierarchical menu that identifies a content in common of target objects sorted into each of said plurality of clusters, to enable said identified user to identify ones of said plurality of target objects stored on said electronic storage media that are likely to be of interest to said identified user.

5   42. (New) The method of claim 41 wherein said step of automatically generating a hierarchical menu further comprises:

ascribing a cluster profile to each of said plurality of clusters of target objects.

10 43. (New) The method of claim 41 wherein said step of sorting comprises:

dividing said plurality of target objects into at least two clusters of target objects based upon said empirical measure of similarity of content of said target objects,

15 subdividing each of said at least two clusters of target objects into at least two subclusters of target objects based upon said empirical measure of similarity of content of said target objects, and

repeating said step of subdividing to produce a multi-level hierarchy of identified
20 clusters of target objects.

44. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein said step of generating a hierarchical menu comprises:

25 ascribing a cluster profile to each cluster of target objects produced by all steps of dividing and subdividing in said step of sorting.

45. (New) The method of claim 44 wherein said step of ascribing comprises:

identifying at least one term in said generated target profiles produced for ones of said plurality of target objects sorted into a cluster of target objects that is indicative of the target content of said ones of said plurality of target objects sorted into said cluster of target objects.

46. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of ascribing comprises:

selecting at least one target object of said ones of said plurality of target objects sorted into said cluster of target objects that are closest to the center of the cluster of target objects, and

ascribing a cluster profile that is indicative of the target content of said ones of said plurality of target objects sorted into said cluster of target objects, said cluster profile comprising elements of at least one of: a title of said selected at least one target object, and a set of words contained in the target profile of said selected at least one target object which have the highest relative frequency.